United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1070
31 January 1992

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Following the meeting of the Security Council held at the level of Heads of State and Government, a joint statement is adopted by the 15 members of the Council, which notes, among other things, the increased role of the United Nations in the field of peace-keeping. The members of the Council also pledge their commitment to international law and to the United Nations Charter and invite the Secretary-General to prepare by 1 July his analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient the capacity of the Organization for preventive diplomacy, for peace-making and for peace-keeping.

+ Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his opening remarks, indicates that news ways of preventing international disputes and inter-states confrontation need to be developed; the role of preventive diplomacy has to be emphasized, he notes.

+ Five Heads of State, seven Heads of Government, one King and two Foreign Ministers - all members of the Council - address this organ in an all-day debate at the Summit.

* * *

At the conclusion of the Security Council Summit Meeting tonight, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, John Major, made a statement on behalf of the fifteen members of the Council.

In the statement, the members of the Council, who met for the first time today at the level of Heads of State and Government, note that they convene at a time of momentous change. They welcome the role that the United Nations has played under the Charter in progress towards settling long-standing regional disputes. However, the Council also recognizes that change has brought new risk for stability and security. All Member States expect United Nations to play a central role at this crucial stage and stress the importance of strengthening and improving the Organization to increase its effectiveness.

Furthermore, the members of the Council reaffirm their commitment to the collective security system of the Charter and express their deep concern over

(more)

acts of international terrorism. The need for the international community to deal effectively with all such acts was emphasized.

In the area of peace-making and peace-keeping, the 15 members of the Council invite the Secretary-General to prepare by 1 July 1992 his analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, for peace-making and for peace-keeping.

The members of the Council further underline the need for all Member States to fulfil their obligations in relations to arms control and disarmament; to prevent the proliferation in all its aspects, including all weapons of mass destruction which constitute, in their opinion, a threat to international peace and security.

In conclusion, the members of the Security Council affirm their determination to build on the initiative of their meeting in order to secure positive advances in promoting international peace and security. They agree that the United Nations Secretary-General has a crucial role to play in that respect.

* * *

In his opening statement to the Security Council Summit meeting this morning, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali indicated that there had hardly been a stage more critical in modern history. The revolution that is sweeping large part of the world derives its momentum and authenticity not from any outdated or recycled ideology, but from the primal need of peoples for freedom, for justice, for solidarity and for recognition of their identities, he said. The contours of the global order to which it will lead are not yet clearly conceivable. However, he said, several lessons are already being driven home.

First, democratization at the national level dictates a corresponding process at the global level. At both levels it aims at the rule of law. For national societies, said the Secretary-General, democratic means strengthening the institutions of popular participation and consent, political pluralism and the defense of human rights, including those of minorities. For global society, he went on saying, it means the democratization of international relations and the participation of all States in developing new norms of international life.

In addition to the democratization process, said Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, new ways of preventing international disputes and inter-states confrontation need to be developed. Nations are too interdependent, national frontiers are two porous and transnational realities too dangerous to permit egocentric isolationism. Collective security can be based only on collective confidence and good faith. With all the convulsions in global society,

continued the Secretary-General, only one power is left that can impose order on incipient chaos. It is a power of principles transcending changing perceptions of expendiency.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali also stressed that a new strategy has to be adopted by the United Nations to address the individual concerns of ethnic and cultural communities. The role of preventive diplomacy has been legitimately emphasized, he said, to identify potential areas of conflict, to provide good offices and to try and resolve crisis before they degenerate into conflicts. That requires a sophisticated communication network, observation capabilites and new financial resources. We must obtain the agreement of the State in crisis, as well as that of the communities that revolt; we must reinvent new federative formulas for the future.

* * *

Opening this morning debate, François Mitterrand, President of France, said that the world would have to invent new forms of solidarity. Instruments had to be adopted to tackle the problems universally. He called on all States to sign a chemical weapons Treaty in Paris by the end of the year. He supported the efforts of Presidents Bush and Yeltsin to reduce their countries' armaments.

The "might is right" principle had to be abandoned and the role of the Charter strengthened in peace-keeping and peace-making, he said. France was willing to make available to United Nations, a force of 1,000 men who could be deployed within one week. Such a measure would put the Military Staff Committee into more active operation and support the role of the United Nations.

The President of France also insisted that many countries today were bogged down economically and required international assistance, private investment, improved trade and cheaper credit. The recurrent crises in some developing countries should be addressed. He hoped there would be a world summit on social development in order to deal with a wide range of problems.

President Rodrigo Borja-Cevallos of Ecuador said that the United Nations had been established as an answer to the deeply felt need for peace and security in the world. The international community was far from having completely won the quest for peace and there were still aggressive intentions which constituted threats to peace, like racial and religious fanaticism, "out-of-control" nationalism and xenophobia.

President Borja-Cevallos welcomed the initiative of President Mitterand of France to convene an international summit on social development. Human development, he said, implied more than just economic development. It concerned the quality of life and whether the earth's inhabitants were benefiting from progress, whether their lives were being prolonged or their personal security and political freedom guaranteed.

(more)

King Hassan II of Morocco said that since the end of the cold war, the responsibilities of the United Nations had broadened. His country supported the idea of strengthening and reforming the organs of the United Nations and hoped that precise and concrete proposals would be made to that effect as soon as possible.

The King of Morocco also drew attention to the worsening of the socio-economic situation in Africa and urged the international community to take urgent steps to help stabilize Africa.

Speaking about the plight of the Palestinian people, King Hassan said that the persistence of that problem demonstrated the inability of the international community to mobilize the will to solve it. Morocco had been one of the first countries to encourage dialogue among the parties to the conflict and hoped the current peace process would be completed, leading to a solution that would be acceptable to all.

In his statement, Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, indicated his country's belief that the time had come to considerably reduce the presence of means of destruction on our planet. Today, he said, they were real opportunities for implementing deep cuts in strategic offensive arms and tactical nuclear weapons; moving towards significant limitations on nuclear testing and even towards its complete cessation; making ABM defences less complicated and costly; considerably reducing conventional armaments and armed forces; ensuring practical implementation of international agreement on the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological weapons, and enhancing the reliability of barriers to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Russia, indicated its President, also believed that the time had come to consider creating a global system for protection of the world community. It could be based, he said, on a reorientation of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) to make use of high technology developed in the Russia's defense complex.

Mr. Yeltsin also pointed out that Russia was fully aware of its responsibility for making the Commonwealth of Independent States a tangible factor of stability in the world. This applied above all to nuclear forces, he said. The participating States of the Commonwealth shared the view that nuclear weapons were an integral part of the strategic forces of the Commonwealth under a single command and unified control.

Finally, Mr. Yeltsin reiterated the willingness of the Russian diplomacy to contribute "in every possible way to the final settlement of conflicts in various regions of the world". Use would be made of the effective role of the United Nations and the Security Council and the Russian Federation would take part in the search for lasting solutions to the Yugoslav and Afghan problems and for a normalization of the situation in the Near and Middle East, and in Cambodia and other regions, concluded Mr. Yeltsin.

(more)

President George Bush of the United States said that democracy, human rights and the rule of law were the building blocks of peace and freedom. True democracy, said Mr. Bush, meant more than simply the rule of the majority. It meant irrevocable commitment to the democracy principles. It meant equal rights for the minorities. And above all, it meant the sanctity of even a single individual against the unjust power of the State.

The President of the United States also indicated that his Government was prepared to move forward on mutual arms reductions. This important issue was going to be considered again tomorrow, at his meeting with President Yeltsin of the Russian Federation, he said.

However, he went on saying, the danger of proliferation remained. Although the threat of global nuclear war was more distant than at any time in the nuclear era, he said, the specter of mass destruction remained all too real, specially if some nations continued to push to acquire weapons of mass destructions and the means to deliver them. It was necessary to focus on Iraq's capability to build or maintain weapons of mass destruction, said President Bush. States sponsoring terrorism must be dealt with, if necessary, by sanctions or stronger measures, to compel them to observe international standards of behaviour.

Today, concluded Mr. Bush, we stand at another crossroad. Perhaps the first time since the creation of the United Nations, it was possible to look at the Organization's Charter as a living, breathing document. The mission was to make it strong and sturdy and to increase dedication and cooperation.

Calling for the basic principles of the United Nations to be brought to their full democratic realization, Carlos Andres Perez, the President of Venezuela, said the Security Council and the General Assembly should be reformed to reflect the political realities of today, rather than those of 1945. He said the General Assembly bodies should be stripped of their bureaucratic traits and directed to contribute to a North-South dialogue, and the Secretariat strengthened and provided with modern management.

The regional organizations should be strengthened in a functional relation with the United Nations, as part of its task of maintaining peace, he continued. The regional conflicts should be addressed with a completely different methodology from that in the past which had reflected the hegemonies and zones of influence of the prevailing powers.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in June, he said, could be the first scenario of the democratization of international relations and of the role that relations between North and South should play from now on. He pointed out that Venezuela had also proposed an international convention to challenge the traffic of narcotics, and had sought to focus the attention of the international community on the "grave and persistent absurdity" of underdevelopment.

Peace-keeping, from its modest beginning, had become a universally accepted and indispensable tool, the Federal Chancellor of Austria, Franz Vranitzky, told the Summit meeting. Now there was a chance to give the United Nations a stronger role in the areas of conflict resolution and prevention.

Some of the recent crises had made clear that there was an urgent need for an early reaction to potential conflicts, he said. Preventative diplomacy by the Secretary-General and, where applicable, by the Security Council would have to be developed further. An early deployment of peacekeeping personnel, even at the request of only one party to a conflict, might help to contain a dispute and facilitate a process of negotiation and compromise before hostilities broke out.

Mr. Vranitzky said he saw a more active involvement in the areas of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament as one of the most important future tasks of the Security Council. "This is not only a political priority of the first order, it also responds to the wishes of our peoples," he said.

The protection of human rights and the rights of ethnic minorities had had an important impact on the development of peaceful relations between States, Mr Vranitzky said. There was a direct connection between democratic processes within countries and the evolution of a political culture conducive to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Peace was most threatened when human rights were abolished, minorities persecuted and democratic processes gave way to totalitarian practice.

The Prime Minister of Belgium, Wilfried Martens, focused on three major tasks which could be implemented through the means of action at the Organization's disposal: cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the international regional organizations; extension of the powers of initiative and inquiry of the Secretary-General and the Security Council, and the greatest possible efficiency of peace-keeping operations. For Belgium, he stressed, it was essential that human rights be universally respected in the exercise of those activities.

Firstly, he said, the international regional organizations should be involved systematically in the Security Council's actions. In Central America they had already played an important role in the implementation of the various agreements which had finally restored peace in several countries in the region.

The second means of action was the power of the Security Council and the Secretary-General to take initatives, he said. In certain situations - as had been learnt with the recent crises in Kuwait, Liberia, Yugoslavia and Somalia - war had seemed the lesser evil or only way out. It was precisely because of the prevalence of war and the illegitimate use of force that the Organization now had such an historic role to play.

(more)

The third issue, he continued, was the issue of peace-keeping operations, the most efficient means of actions for the Council in coordination with the Secretary-General. The Secretariat should now reorganize and streamline their management, a development necessitated by their success and increase in number in the past few years, and by the new scope those operations were to take on in the near future.

The Prime Minister of Cape Verde, Carlos Alberto Wahnon de Carvalho Veiga, said a strong Security Council was one whose decisions were based on thorough discussion and reflected the views of all its members. The Council's moral authority was bound to suffer whenever decisions were taken without exhaustive efforts to achieve consensus.

The role of peace-keeping operations should be strengthened, he said. Although such activities were ingeniously invented to fill the vacuum created by the United Nations' inability to implement the collective security system, they had gained a life of their own and become an indispensable tool in the hands of the Security Council. Without interfering with the sovereignty of countries, the deployment of peace-keeping forces could play a decisive role in resolving national conflicts whenever a government was not really in control and chaos had set in.

The Prime Minister of China, Li Peng, stated that in contrast to a turbulent Europe, the Asia-Pacific region enjoyed relative stability. The signing of the Paris Agreement had laid the foundation for the final settlement of the Cambodian conflict. Following their simultaneous participation in the United Nations, the North and South of Korea had signed the protocol on mutual non-agression and the joint declaration of the nuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Quite a few countries in the Asia-Pacific region had enjoyed a high economic growth rate, he said.

In this environment, said the Prime Minister, China intended to strengthen and develop its friendly and good neighbourly relations with the surrounding countries.

He said that the new international order should be established on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression and non-intereference in each other's internal affairs. Also, he said, a new international order should include a new economic order since the ever-widening gap between the North and the South had become a destabilizing factor in international life. All nuclear-weapon States, he said, should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, or to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-free zones. The nuclear weapons of the disintegrated Soviet Union should be placed under effective control, he said.

The Prime Minister of China concluded by saying that the United Nations should play a more active role in maintaining world peace and promoting development.

The Prime Minister of India, P.V. Narasimnha Rao, said the Charter was only as legitimate and secure as its underpinning by the collective will of the international community. Its interpretation and the actions of Security Council had to flow from a general consensus and not from the views of a few. "What was right and just must become transparent. It is as simple as that," he stated.

He said that the size of the Security Council must be expanded to allow for wider representation. It was also incumbent on the Council, he went on, that it anticipate all the consequences of its decisions. Some of them - economic sanctions for instance - could have a major impact on those they were least intended to affect, and for developing countries that could be catastrophic. Once the primary purpose of sanctions had been fulfilled, the Council should act decisively to alleviate the human suffering incurred.

His country shared the concern about proliferation of nuclear weapons. Another dimension of international security, he added, was the possible loss of control over nuclear arsenals and the uncontrolled spread of ready-made nuclear weapons across the globe. Punitive action on a selective basis could not succeed. To be effective, a non-proliferation regime must be universal, comprehensive and non-disicriminatory, with the goal of complete nuclear disarmament.

The Prime Minister of Japan, Kiichi Miyazawa, indicated that his country was now striving to make the necessary domestic arrangements to contribute personnel to peace-keeping operations. He would do his utmost to help the relevant legislation approved by the Japanese Diet during its current session which commence this month, he said.

Speaking of the United Nations' role in today's world, Mr. Miyazawa said that since the Security Council was at the centre of the Organization's effort to maintain international peace and security, it was important to consider thoroughly ways to adjust its function, composition, and other aspects "so as to make it more reflective of the realities of the new era", he said. It was also important, he said, to strengthen the functions of the United Nations so that it can work more effectively to secure a peacefull world order. An important step in this direction was made last December with the adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration proposed and co-sponsored by Japan and other countries on United Nations fact-finding role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Also a sound financial base was essential to enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization. In particular, in the peace-keeping area.

Mr. Miyazawa pointed out the active role played by his country in the area of the disarmament particularly nuclear disarmament with a view to attaining strategic stability at the lower level of armament. The proliferation and transfer of weapons was a matter of concern to all the members of the international community, he said. It was incumbent upon the Security Council to be seized with the developments made in this areas.

(more)

The Prime Minister of Japan concluded by proposing the creation of a consultative mechanism on the establishment of peace-keeping operations particularly the large scale operations. He also suggested that concrete ways be sought to strengthened the role of the United Nations in facing non-military threat to the future security and prosperity of humankind, including those relating to the environment, refugees, and poverty.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Géza Jeszenszky, said that one of the most urgent tasks stems from the situation emerging after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. Following more than seven decades of rule by totalitarian regime, what emerges is an economy in ruins with ensuing grave social problems, no clear-cut arrangements for the control of formidable nuclear weapons and the eruption of violent ethnic discords. The process of rearrangement taking place in Eastern Europe has not led only to potential crisis situation, but also to an actual explosion in what has been Yugoslavia, he said. It was incumbent upon the Security Council to carefully monitor, in close cooperation with the European Community, the developments in that area and to deploy United Nations monitors or peace-keeping forces in all regions where tensions and conflicts might arise.

Speaking of the disarmament issue, Mr. Jeszenszky said that not only war industries should be converted to civilian purposes, but a large number of professional soldiers also need to be retrained and reprogrammed. The future of the newly independent States in the Balkans and in the former Soviet Union hinges largely on the success or failure of this huge endeavour of human conversion, he concluded.

Foreign Minister Shamuyarira of Zimbabwe said that because the principles of the Charter must govern the global order, the process must begin with a re-examination of the Charter itself. A new world order could best be constructed by updating provisions that had been rendered obsolete by new international circumstances. In response to the misgivings expressed by some about the prosecution of the Gulf war, future collective enforcement operations must be fully accountable to the Council and should be truly representative and should not be dominated by a single group of countries.

Closing the meeting, Mr. John Major, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and host of the Summit, emphasized the new opportunities in preventive diplomacy, in peace-making and peace-keeping. Preventive diplomacy means action to avert, or at least to contain crises, he said. In future, the Council must be prepared to act before tension becomes concrete. Peace-making and peace-keeping, he indicated, should run in parallel.

Mr. Major stressed that the Member States of the United Nations must be active in arms control. First, he said, the START and CFE Treaties must be implemented; second, further measures of disarmament - regional and global - must be worked out; third, arrangements must be made to prevent proliferation and discouraged the accumulation of leathal weaponry.

(more)

Mr. Major also said that Britain believes that all States must respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Good Government is not a luxury, it is a bed-rock on which we build a stable, prosperous society, he said.

The Prime Minister also said that the United Nations can play a key role in promoting acceptance of the principles of the Charter and the peaceful settlement of disputes. His country will work closely with the Secretary-General to strengthened hand-in-hands the Organization's capacity to respond to crises and incipient crisis where it threatens, he concluded.

* *** *